AmigaMCC News
Fort Worth Dallas
April 2009

Amiga OS 4.1 for Pegasos II

Boys and girls, it's time to dust off your Pegasos II machine, or maybe to reduce the size of your MorphOS partition, because there's a new contender coming your way: ACube Systems Srl has announced the immediate availability of AmigaOS 4.1 for the Pegasos II. It's 01:40 here, so I can't check if the sky is falling, but I'm pretty sure it is.

If only a few months ago you would've told anyone in the Amiga community that AmigaOS 4.1 would be available for the Pegasos II, you would probably receive a pat on the head and a few reassuring words about going along with the nice man in the white coat. That was then, this is now: Pegasos II owners can enjoy AmigaOS 4.1.

When it comes to actually increasing the installed base of AmigaOS 4, the Pegasos II route isn't exactly going to make a whole lot of difference; the machine is no longer in production, so you need one from eBay or similar locations. With both MorphOS and AmigaOS contending for the same machine, prices for the Pegasos II will only go up.

Releasing AmigaOS 4.1 this way is more of a mental victory; despite all the legal bickering and other incomprehensible legal nonsense, AmigaOS is still making its way to new platforms, paving the way for the release everyone is actually waiting for: AmigaOS 4.1 for PowerPC Macs. Support for these old Apple boxes is what both MorphOS and AmigaOS 4.1 need in order to actually make any sizable impact. I know I personally would shell out cash for both of them if they ran on my PowerMac G4 dual-450Mhz. To state it another way: apparently, Hyperion and ACube can market AmigaOS 4 for new machines now – then why on earth would you wait with at least a Mac Mini version? In any case, AmigaOS 4.1 for Pegasos II is available immediately for 105 EUR.

…by Thom Holwerda
http://snurl.com/eplao

Amiga OS and the x86

Despite the recent emergence of several new ways to actually run AmigaOS 4.0, the supply of machines is still extremely small, and not very future proof. As such, one of the most recurring questions within the Amiga community is why don't they port the darn thing to x86? In the past few days and weeks, Amigaworld.net has been overladen with threads and comments about the x86 question, and it has even driven someone to set up a crude bounty for an x86 version for AmigaOS 4.0. The current x86 thread was started March 19, and already measures 692 posts in 35 pages.

There are several standard replies to the x86 question within the Amiga community. There are people who still see a future in the PowerPC market, even after years and years of utter misery. Sadly, even though the PowerPC platform is far from dead, it simply doesn't play a role any more in the desktop market. Whenever a company announces an AmigaOS4-capable board, we're getting hardware that's 9 years old with an insane price tag.

A number of Amigans even go as far as to say that people shouldn't be able to get AmigaOS4 so easily, and they complain that people who want an x86 variant of the AmigaOS are just looking for a free ride. The word "elitist" doesn't even begin to describe this attitude.

There also also people who claim that moving AmigaOS4 to x86 would mean the end of the Amiga operating system, because it would not be able to compete with other x86 operating systems such as Linux and Windows. This seems like a rather odd reasoning to me: we cannot compete if we run on x86, but we can compete if we run on underpowered, overpriced hardware, with no option for people to try it out before buying? Logic is something that has left much of the Amiga community long ago.

Another, much more valid reply is that there already is an x86 Amiga operating system: AROS. AROS is open source, free, and runs on lots of hardware, and can even have other operating systems as hosts. However, it is "only" source-compatible with AmigaOS, not binary compatible. This, however, is a moot point in this discussion since a possible x86 version of AmigaOS4 wouldn't be able to run legacy software either.

Sadly, the discussion itself seems to be moot since Hyperion, who develop AmigaOS4 might not be allowed to port AmigaOS4 over in the first place. The company is

entangled in a legal battle with Amiga, Inc., a battle no one really understands any more. Still, these legal troubles have not prevented Hyperion from releasing AmigaOS4 for the Pegasos II, which raises the question just how much of a limiting factor the lawsuit actually is.

It's a sad state of affairs, but there's little anyone can do. It's really too bad, because AmigaOS4 certainly has something to offer to many enthusiasts. As it stands now, however, getting AmigaOS4 is simply too much of an investment in a relatively old and limited platform, and especially in the economic climate we're in today, few people will shell out boatloads of money for a toy operating system.
…by Thom Holwerda
http://snurl.com/eplgj

Lafayette, LA Gets Fiber

February 6, 2009
After nearly five years of planning and fighting with local cable and phone companies, the Lafayette Utilities System opened its fiber-optic broadband network for business. The utility began offering service this week, according to the Lafayette, La. local newspaper, *The Daily Advertiser*. A small number of customers already have phone, TV, and Internet service. And beginning Friday, LUS will begin marketing the service to customers in the first phase of the roll out. LUS plans to roll out service gradually in three phases and expects to offer a triple play service to all residents throughout the city by 2011.

The utility system, which built a fiber network to service its utilities business, had been offering wholesale bandwidth services to Internet service providers, and providing retail broadband services to city agencies since 2002. In 2004, the agency began looking at ways to offer broadband services to residents and businesses.

BellSouth and Cox Communications, the local telephone and cable companies serving Lafayette, strongly opposed the utility system's plan. And they filed several lawsuits to stop the utility from raising the funds to build the network. But after the public voted in favor of the project and the utility fought a series of lengthy legal battles that went all the way to the Louisiana Supreme Court, LUS was finally able to sell bonds to fund its project.

The new network was supposed to launch in January, but it was delayed by negotiations over television programming, The Daily Advertiser said. It's easy to see why Cox Communications, the local cable operator, and AT&T, which bought local phone company BellSouth, are threatened by LUS. Pricing for the new triple play services are very competitive. Consumers can get a triple play bundle from about $85 to $200 a month. And the broadband services offer download and upload speeds between 10Mbps to 50Mbps. The standalone broadband service costs about $29 for symmetrical 10Mbps downloads and uploads; $45 for 30Mbps, and $58 for 50Mbps service. The service doesn't require a contract and there's no installation fee.

The maximum download speed offered by AT&T is 6Mbps for $43 a month. And its cheapest is a 768Kbps service for $20 a month. Cox only offers Internet download speeds up to 15Mbps. Depending on what specific services are selected, bundled pricing from AT&T and Cox is comparable. The big exception is that AT&T and Cox offer these prices as part of a promotion, whereas LUS prices are the actual standard prices and will not expire.

Lafayette is just one of many cities that has tried to build its own broadband network. In nearly every instance, cable and phone companies have tried to prevent these network build outs. They argue that it's unfair for public utilities and cities to use taxpayer money or government bonds to build competing networks. It will be interesting to see how this debate shakes out under the new Obama administration. President Obama has made it clear that he hopes to fund projects to bring broadband service to every American. There is a chance that some of these public utilities and other non-traditional entities may end up with some of the billions of dollars in promised federal funding to build these networks.
…by Marguerite Reardon, cnet.com

April Calendar

April 6 — Amiga-By-The-Loop Chapter
7:00 pm — South Grand Prairie Library
760 Bardin Road, Grand Prairie

April 6 — MCCC Board of Director's Meeting
Approx 9:15 pm — Location TBD

April 25 — Newsletter Deadline — 7:00 am

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